

well, publishing several groundbreaking written works.

Richie Perez was a truth-seeker. Wherever he went, he spoke the truth, lived by the truth, and inspired the truth in others. He embodied the meaning of righteousness and what is good and real in our local communities. He believed in giving people a second chance, and in fighting back against the injustices that had imperiled them.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Richie Perez, and join with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to recognize his extraordinary life.

TRIBUTE TO THE NFA CONVENTION IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA

HON. RIC KELLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the National Franchise Association (NFA), the association of Burger King franchisees. The NFA will be in Orlando May 3–6, 2004 for its 12th Annual Convention and Tradeshow. I am delighted the NFA has chosen once again to return to Orlando. In fact, this will be the third time the NFA has visited Orlando with nearly 3,500 Burger King franchisees, vendors, and other participants. With its theme parks and attractions, Orlando is one of our Nation's premier vacation and convention destinations—it's clear to see why groups like NFA want to return to Orlando over and over again. The theme of this year's NFA convention, "The Magic of the Fire," is quite apropos as it combines the "Magic" of Orlando and the entrepreneurial "Fire" of the Burger King franchisees.

Two Burger King franchisees, in particular, have been instrumental in bringing the Burger King family to Orlando. They are Julian Josephson and Dominick Vespoli.

Julian Josephson, the Chairman of the NFA, has a story very similar to many of our immigrant ancestors who brought their entrepreneurial spirit to this country seeking a brighter future. Julian moved to the United States from Johannesburg, South Africa in 1978. Since then, he and his business partner Stanley Smiedt, have built a successful business that includes nearly 40 Burger King Restaurants in Southern California, Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado. Julian has not only provided exceptional leadership to the NFA as chairman and vice president, he has served his community through numerous initiatives. Julian has been a dedicated husband and father to his wife Jenny and their children Heidi and Anthony. Julian and Jenny are the proud grandparents of Maya Silberstein.

Dominick Vespoli is the Convention Chairman. Dominick grew up in Jersey City, New Jersey and began working in Burger King restaurants in 1974. He worked in a variety of jobs learning the skills needed to run successful restaurants. In 1990, Dominick became a Burger King franchisee. He, and his business partner Nathan Blau, now own and operate 10 successful Burger King restaurants in New Jersey. Dominick has been a dedicated husband and father to his wife Celenia and their two sons, Jason and James.

The restaurant industry as a whole employs 12 million men and women, a significant driving force for our economy. I commend Julian and Dominick, and their fellow franchise owners, for their contributions to job creation and economic growth. These entrepreneurs are the backbone of our economy. I wish to thank them for their outstanding service to the NFA and their commitment to their communities. I look forward to seeing them both and the other Burger King franchisees when they visit Orlando in May.

HONORING JEFFREY BUSCH

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Jeffrey Busch upon his selection as the Jefferson Award winner in Delaware. Mr. Busch is the founder and chairman of Safe Blood for Africa, an organization dedicated to stemming the tide of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. With true innovative spirit, he has brought a business approach to the logistical problems of getting safe blood to this region. Mr. Busch is not only a commendable American citizen, he is an exemplary citizen of the world.

With the utmost humility, Mr. Busch ensures safe blood for transfusions in 20 sub-Saharan African nations. His organization also protects Africans from the spread of such diseases as hepatitis B and C and syphilis. One would never know to speak to Mr. Busch that he has likely spared thousands of Africans from the dangers of HIV and AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate Jeffrey Busch upon his selection as the Jefferson Award winner in Delaware. His selflessness serves as an example to us all. Furthermore, it has been my sincere privilege to know Mr. Busch personally, and I am very proud to that he is a Delawarean.

RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the American Legion, a noble organization, chartered by Congress in 1919. The American Legion turned 85 this week and its members across our Nation are celebrating this historic event.

I'm proud to report that my home district celebrated this occasion recently at an event hosted by Retired Air Force Colonel Ted Buck of Mt. Vernon. He served 22 years active duty including 30 months during the Vietnam War. He received two Distinguished Flying Crosses, The Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with a Silver Star and the Purple Heart. He was also awarded the Legion of Merit award for his duty as a pilot for Dr. Henry Kissinger on his historic shuttle diplomacy.

I mention Colonel Buck by name because he puts a face on an organization made up of

many heroic men and women who, like Colonel Buck, have put their lives on the line for this Nation. While patriotism and support for our men and women in uniform comes in and out of favor here in Washington, D.C. our Nation is blessed to have an organization that exists to meet the needs of our veterans. I consider myself fortunate to be a member of the American Legion and I'm honored to have the opportunity to wish them a happy 85th birthday. I speak for all of my colleagues in wishing the American Legion many more years to continue their work to insure appropriate respect for the American veteran and their families.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 393) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2005 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2004 and 2006 through 2009:

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, a few days ago, I reluctantly voted for the budget resolution that was thoroughly debated on the House floor. My reluctance in voting for the budget was based on one main cause, my concern for our nation's veterans. Even though we increased funding in veterans' care once again, I believe there was further room for improvement.

The budget that we passed is a step forward in the areas of deficit reduction and spending control. I am heartened by our efforts to cap some areas of government spending but disappointed that we continue to debate the proper level of veterans' funding. In the past months, there has been great discussion in the funding that these brave individuals who have sacrificed so much for our country will receive from the VA. With that discussion, I believe that we should never lose sight of what these veterans have accomplished and what they have meant to our Nation's freedom.

As this process moves forward, I believe that there are additional areas of the budget that can be curtailed to further supplement our veterans' funding needs. For example, we should continue to scrutinize our massive foreign aid budget for savings that can be returned to the U.S. shores and to the veterans' needs.

In the end, I voted for this budget because we must continue the process and we will have opportunities to improve our veterans' funding. Additionally, to delay this budget means we delay our national defense and our homeland security priorities. To delay this budget risks not having a budget at all and that leaves no barriers to government spending. In a time of war, we can not allow that to happen.

We must all work hard to improve the budget before it comes to conference. I hope that